

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 1825

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO DIA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, JM
SUBJECT: FURTHER DEFENSE OF THE HOME GUARD

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 1217

1. PRIME MINISTER MANLEY'S MARCH 14 TELEVISION REMARKS
ANNOUNCING THE "RESTRUCTURING" OF THE HOME GUARD (SEE REFTEL)
HAVE CLEARLY BEEN INADEQUATE TO ALLAY PUBLIC SUSPICIONS
REGARDING THE AUXILIARY FORCE'S MISSION. ON APRIL 18,
ROY MCGANN, THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY IN THE PRIME
MINISTER'S OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HOME GUARD,
ISSUED A LENGTHY STATEMENT INTENDED TO EXPLAIN AWAY CONCERNS.

2. MCGANN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

-- THE HOME GUARD IS INTENDED TO SUPPLEMENT THE REGULAR POLICE,
THEREBY FREEING THEM FOR MORE "SOPHISTICATED" DETECTION DUTIES;

-- THE HOME GUARD IS "NON-PARTISAN";
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-- HOME GUARDS WILL OPERATE ONLY WITHIN SPECIFICALLY DEFINED
AREAS AND THEIR POWER OF ARREST IS EFFECTIVE (I) ONLY IN THE
DEFINED AREA (II) WHILE ON DUTY;

-- EACH HOME GUARD "GROUP" WILL CONSIST OF FIVE PERSONS WHO
WILL UNDERTAKE PATROLS "ORGANIZED AND SUPERVISED" BY THE POLICE;

-- IN EACH GROUP, ONLY ONE HOME GUARD WILL BE ARMED, AND THE ARMS WILL BE STORED IN THE GROUP'S STATION HOUSE WHEN NOT IN USE; AND

-- TRAINING IN THE USE OF FIREARMS WILL BE CONDUCTED BY THE JAMAICA DEFENSE FORCE WHILE THE POLICE WILL INSTRUCT HOME GUARDS IN SUCH AREAS AS "DISCIPLINE, PATROL AND GUARD TECHNIQUES, OFFENSES AGAINST THE PERSON LAW, OFFENSES AGAINST PROPERTY, VAGRANCY AND OTHER ALLIED ACTS RELATING TO THE PREVENTION OF CRIME."

3. IN THE COURSE OF THE STATEMENT, MCGANN SAID, "I WISH TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT THE HOME GUARD DOES NOT FALL UNDER THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF THE POLITICAL DIRECTORATE." STRESSING THAT WHILE HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HOME GUARD, HIS RESPONSIBILITIES DO NOT EXTEND BEYOND MATTERS OF POLICY. "ALL ASPECTS OF HOME GUARD ACTIVITIES--RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, DIRECTION, ADMINISTRATION, ARE THE CLEAR RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE AND THE OFFICERS TO WHOM HE WISHES TO DELEGATE THIS AUTHORITY."

4. COMMENT: THAT MCGANN'S STATEMENT WILL LAY TO REST SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE HOME GUARD SEEMS UNLIKELY. THIS WILL ACHIEVED BY A CLEAR AND UNEQUIVOCAL DEMONSTRATION THAT THE HOME GUARD IS INDEED NO MORE THAN AN AUXILIARY TO THE POLICE AND THAT ITS RANKS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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OPEN TO ALL JAMAICANS WITHOUT REGARD TO POLITICAL LOYALTY. PERHAPS THE MOST POSITIVE ASPECT OF THE CLOUD OF SUSPICION SURROUNDING THE HOME GUARD IS THE FACT THAT IT REDUCES ANY TEMPTATION THAT MAY EXIST TO USE THE HOME GUARD FOR ANY BUT ITS STATED PURPOSES.
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